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Swift's Vexed Satire of Hobbes and Lucretius

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SWIFT'S VEXED SATIRE OF HOBBES AND LUCRETIUS

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Sarah Reynard Thumm

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APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of

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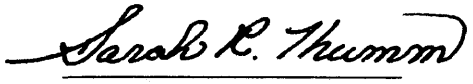

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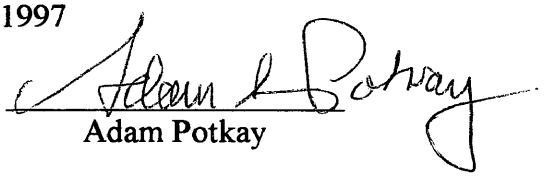
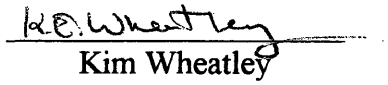
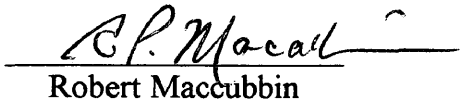


Adam Potkay



Kim Wheatley



Robert Maccubbin

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated with profound gratitude to Meghan Mackey, for her encouragement and friendship.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the connection between Jonathan Swift, Thomas Hobbes, and the classical philosophers Epicurus and Lucretius. The literary pieces analyzed are Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura (On the Nature of Things)*, Thomas Hobbes's De Homine and Leviathan, and Swift's letters, A Tale of a Tub, and Gulliver's Travels.

First, the fundamental ideas of Lucretius are established. Then, those ideas are compared to the later work of Thomas Hobbes, and found to serve as a foundation for his works De Homine and Leviathan. In addition to revealing characteristics similar to those of Lucretius, Hobbes introduces his belief that mankind is neither naturally rational nor innately good, and explains that in essence it is fear of one another that prompts men to live in a society governed by laws.

Jonathan Swift, through his letters, and A Tale of a Tub and Gulliver's Travels, addresses the ideas of Hobbes, and as a result those of Lucretius. Though he professes to despise their ideas, he in fact reveals himself to be a Hobbist/Lucretian in certain ironic and important ways. This paradox is the main focus of the thesis.

SWIFT'S VEXED SATIRE OF HOBBES AND LUCRETIUS

In the eighteenth century there raged a debate that would leave an indelible mark on all philosophy of human nature to follow. It revolved around the issue of the true nature of man, and it involved two very distinct schools of thought; one insisted that man was an inherently good being, whose evil actions were a symptom of being led astray by the temptations and complications of a strongly governed society. The other, rooted most recently in the theories of Thomas Hobbes, maintained that man was rather a selfish brute at heart, forced to enter into contract with his fellow beasts to form a society in which he could live without fear of the terrible ills that would surely befall him in what Hobbes called "the state of nature." While some took their beliefs to debating chambers or coffeehouses, men such as Jonathan Swift took pen in hand and wrote several pieces of literature that address, if somewhat obliquely, the debate and their position within it. In his A Tale of a Tub and Gulliver's Travels, Swift reveals what appears to be a paradox: in the former work he claims to write specifically against Thomas Hobbes, but in the latter he appears to subscribe to some of Hobbes's ideas, and to his theories on the nature of man. It is this dynamic that invites a study of the relationship between Thomas Hobbes and Jonathan Swift. The most effective means of initiating such an analysis is to become familiar with Hobbes as Swift would have known him, that is, through his two most powerful works, Leviathan and De Homine.

I.

Published in 1651 as Thomas Hobbes's culminating achievement in political science, Leviathan is a seventeenth - century manifesto designed to reveal not only what man is, but what he ought to be. By first attempting to define man and the motivations

for his behavior, Hobbes establishes him as little more than an animal whose only priority is self-preservation. After having done so, he then reveals his theory on the ways in which a society populated by such creatures generates what he identifies as the artificial man, or leviathan. Hobbes then elaborates further by explaining that it is this leviathan that gives birth to the "Commonwealth," and so his logic rests upon a linear connection which binds man at his most primitive to Mankind and its need for social contracts. The focus throughout is to prove that such an evolution is the direct result of man's living within the atomistic, materialistic, and atheistic universe, as was proposed in a later piece, De Homine, written in 1658. Man's self - preservation, Hobbes seems to believe, is the fertile soil in which germinate, alternately, peace and war, sovereignty and religion. From this soil flourish the societies that must enter into contracts or else be lost again in the State of Nature. But Hobbes's findings were not wholly original - - nor would Swift have thought them so. Throughout Leviathan lay the artifacts of an earlier philosophy, namely that recorded by the Latin poet and Epicurean philosopher Lucretius. Writing between 98 and 55 B.C., Lucretius was a devoted disciple of the third century B.C. Greek philosopher Epicurus, whose theories revolved around a therapeutic disbelief in the divine creation and government, and in the afterlife. Epicurus held that such a suspension of conventional dogma would allow for the pursuit of earthly pleasures without fear of punishment from the gods while on earth, or of eternal damnation once dead. In effect, then, Epicurus made strides to eliminate mystery and fear by replacing them, through science, with logical explanations for natural phenomena. Lucretius, with these concepts as his foundation, composed his poem On the Nature of Things in order to reinforce the Epicurean explanations for those things about the world that had first inspired men to attribute them to divinity. Its style and many of its ideas were borrowed by Hobbes. Through a study of Leviathan and On the Nature of Things, the Epicurean/Lucretian origins of Hobbes's masterpiece becomes quite clear.

Thomas Hobbes wrote his manifesto under the assumption that it is the desire of every man to hold dominion and wield power over all other men. This instinct, coupled with that of self-preservation, leads to the need for sovereign leadership by one person and a contract, each man with the other, to bind violent hands and greedy natures. In Part I, Chapter XIII, *Of the Naturall Condition of Mankind, as concerning their Felicity, and Misery,* Hobbes asserts, "in the nature of man, we find three principall causes of quarrell. First, Competition; Secondly, Diffidence; Thirdly, Glory" (Leviathan, 185). By "nature" one may assume is meant that all men are born with a predisposition to quarrel. It is this predisposition that Hobbes addresses later in the same chapter as he explains that the "Passions that encline men to Peace, are Feare of Death; Desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living; and a Hope by their Industry to obtain them" (Leviathan, 188). It is clear that, in Hobbes's opinion, mankind suffers perpetual conflict, both internal and external; and even the basis for peace is a dynamic tension between our fears and hopes. In order to maintain a balance between them, and as well ensure a safe environment in which a society may thrive, Hobbes claims to uncover certain "Lawes of Nature" which, through science, will in turn yield morality and the generation of the "Common-Wealth."

The *Lex Naturalis*, or Law of Nature, is for Hobbes any rule or precept by which a man is forbidden to do that which is destructive of his own life or the life of another. He is quick to distinguish the Law of Nature from the *Jus Naturale*, or Right of Nature, which, in giving men equality gives them also equal right to use their own power to do anything they reason necessary for their own well-being. The law binds, whereas the right permits, and it is due to the latter that the former must be installed willingly by humanity. Note the following passage from Leviathan in which Hobbes infers another *Lex Naturalis*:

> From this Fundamentall Law of Nature, by which men are commanded to endeavour Peace, is derived this second Law; *That a man be willing, when others*

> *are so too, as farre-forth, as for Peace, and defence of himselfe he shall think it necessary, to lay down his right to all things; and be contented with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himselfe.* (Leviathan, 190)

These two fundamental Laws of Nature do in fact replace natural liberties - - those of every man for himself - - with a liberty Hobbes, and humanity, values more - - that of security. The freedom of killing his neighbor for his silver is now the freedom for a man to, ideally, leave unlatched the door in the confidence that his neighbor will not kill him for the same reason. This defines, in Leviathan, a covenant. The covenant, or agreement, while ideal for the elimination of what Hobbes believes to be the condition of man - - "a condition of Warre of every one against every one" (Leviathan, 189) - - cannot go unmonitored. It is this fact that makes necessary the generation of Hobbes's "Common-Wealth," which he calls as well, "Leviathan."

The meanings of the word "leviathan" are quite varied. Although its origin is unknown, it had been used before Hobbes to represent a sea monster in Hebrew poetry, Satan (1595), a man of vast power or wealth (1607), and anything huge and/or monstrous (1624). With the publication of Leviathan in1651, Hobbes was the first to apply it to the commonwealth as an organism. Past uses of the word, quite negative in meaning, invite pause to wonder at the author's choice. Does it reflect the commonwealth as a body "of vast power or wealth," or simply a "monstrous" collection of beings whose natures may themselves be so called - - even evil, as the 1595 use suggests? It is obvious that Hobbes believes man naturally incapable of peace and goodwill, and it is arguable that his title reflects his disgust with human brutishness. The brutes, however, may be made more reasonable within the ironically liberating chains of the commonwealth, which itself must be governed by one man - - the sovereign. Thus Hobbes lets sail his leviathan, with its masthead the sovereign, thrust forth by the mutual consent of the men within it, kept safe

by laws and covenant but threatened by the natural instincts of man to enter into the State of Nature, or perpetual warfare, as the following passage implies:

> This done, the Multitude so united in one Person, is called a COMMON-WEALTH, in latine CIVITAS. This is the Generation of that LEVIATHAN, or rather (to speake more reverently) of the *Mortall God*, to which wee owe under the Immortall *God*, our peace and defence. (Leviathan, 227)

In an apology for using the term "Leviathan" in his description of the evolution from the brutish individual to a society bound by a common leader, Hobbes indicates an awareness of the more sinister definitions of the word. It seems not a title to be desired, yet he identifies it clearly with the "*Mortall God*" created by men through joining in contract, and so invites an investigation into its generation and its connection with the "*Immortall God*" created, Hobbes will affirm, through the fear of man. It is here, in philosophy of religion, that Lucretius and Hobbes meet, and put forth physical, material evidence to explain away those mysteries that first caused man to force the unknown into the more secure mold of a divine being.

In his Epicurean poem, On the Nature of Things, Lucretius sings of the success of his mentor in bringing to mortals equality with the heavens. His method is to regress to the very beginnings of the world, dissecting creation to reveal a series of physical causes for its creation; he is able to attribute every mystery of the world to atomism, or materialism, by which all worldly occurrences can be explained by considering them in terms of physical matter and science. From there he moves to the logical results of the science he extols, and uses those results to eliminate superstition. In so doing, he also attempts to put an end to fear of the unknown and, in his polytheistic society, fear of the gods, and follows his heroic model, Epicurus:

> When human life to view lay foully prostrate upon earth

> crushed down under the weight of religion, who showed her head from the quarters of heaven with hideous aspect lowering upon mortals, a man of Greece [Epicurus] ventured first to lift up his mortal eyes to her face and first to withstand her to her face. Him neither story of gods nor thunderbolts nor heaven with threatening roar could quell: they only chafed the more eager courage of his soul, filling him with desire to be the first to burst the fast bars of nature's portals. Therefore the living force of his soul gained the day: on he passed far beyond the flaming walls of the world and traversed throughout in mind and spirit the immeasurable universe; whence he returns a conqueror to tell us what can, what cannot come into being; in short on what principle each thing has its powers defined, its deepset boundary mark. Therefore religion is put under foot and trampled upon in turn; us his victory brings level with heaven. (Lucretius, l. 62-79))

It is religion, Lucretius argues, which has led so many down the path of sin. The terror of men at not being able to explain a bolt of lightning or the changing of the tides caused them to attribute all of creation to the gods. It is the intention of Lucretius to disprove the creative power of these gods by explaining "first - beginnings," or the generation of the physical world by movements equally physical in nature.

All of nature is founded on two things: bodies and voids. The joining and separating of like bodies causes every element to occur; and those elements have, from the beginning of time, combined and moved to make up the world. That fish breathe in water and suffocate in an environment of air alone is, for example, a matter of physics rather than the hand of a god. The same logic applies to man. Hobbes reinforces this atomistic/materialistic idea in a work published in 1658, De Homine, or Concerning Man, when he writes of our very emotions that they "consist in various motions of the blood and animal spirits" (55) and that the feelings of glory and shame, as well as the reactions manifested by weeping and laughter, are all caused by actual movements within the human frame (58-59). Lucretius addresses the constitution of man from a purely physical

perspective, insisting that "the nature of the mind and soul is bodily" (32). Reason must admit, continues the poet, that since the soul is bodily, the death of the body is also the death of the soul. A dead soul will therefore have no afterlife - - no punishment or praise - - nothing to fear. Rather, the punishment consists of a life on earth full of the unnecessary fear and guilt created out of man's self-imposed religious dogma, as Lucretius here notes:

> But there is in life a dread of punishment for evil deeds, signal as the deeds are signal, and for atonement of guilt, the prison and the frightful hurling down from the rock, scourgings, executioners, the dungeon of the doomed, the pitch, the metal plate, torches; and even though these are wanting, yet the conscience-stricken mind through boding fears applies to itself goads and frightens itself with whips, and sees not meanwhile what end there can be of ills or what limit at last is to be set to punishments, and fears lest these very evils be enhanced after death. The life of fools at length becomes a hell here on earth. (Lucretius, l. 1010 -1023)

The gods, then, did not create the world, but men created the gods to account for the mysteries of it; they did so to allay fear, but ironically only came to fear the gods they themselves created. Lucretius's irony is that men create religion out of fear, and so create for themselves misery. By attempting to prove such an idea as fact, Lucretius lays the foundations for a new kind of man, one who, with nothing to fear, is free to indulge in every proper earthly pleasure and delight - - ethically and rightly. The progression from the physical to the scientific to the ethical is made clear: science has disproved the existence of a higher power and so, logically, man no longer need adhere to a code of ethics founded upon it.

Thomas Hobbes addresses the same issue as that of Lucretius mentioned above in Leviathan, Part I, Chapter XII, *Of Religion.* Noting that man is the only being in which the signs of religion may be observed, Hobbes concludes that the seeds of religion are solely within him as well. In the notes that accompany the text in its margins, he continues

to summarize the characteristics peculiar to man, namely "his desire of Knowing causes, [his] consideration of the Beginning of things, [and] his observation of the Sequell of things," which predispose him to create a divine explanation for that which he cannot comprehend (Leviathan, 168-169). "The naturall Cause of Religion," he concludes, is "the Anxiety of the time to come" (Leviathan, 169). The reflection of Lucretius here is unmistakable, and the following passage from Leviathan further explains man's "perpetuall feare" born of his own creation:

> For being assured that there be causes of all things that have arrived hitherto, or shall arrive hereafter; it is impossible for a man, who continually endeavoureth to secure himselfe against the evill he feares, and procure the good he desireth, not to be in a perpetuall solicitude of the time to come; So that every man, especially those that are over provident, are in an estate like that of *Prometheus*. For as *Prometheus* (which interpreted, is, *The prudent man*,) was bound to the hill *Caucasus*, a place of large prospect, where, an Eagle feeding on his liver, devoured in the day, as much as was repayred in the night: So that man, which looks too far before him, in the care of future time, hath his heart all the day long, gnawed on by feare of death, poverty, or other calamity; and has no repose, nor pause of his anxiety, but in sleep. (Leviathan, 169)

Though Hobbes's use of a classical, polytheistic figure such as Prometheus alludes to a time well before that of Lucretius, it nevertheless calls him to mind, and his ideas with him. Hobbes reaches into the past and finds men have not changed. His desire to know the causes of that which goes on around him and a fear of the unknown future are to Hobbes, as well as his Epicurean ancestor, the causes of religion. In terms of the effect of religion on the commonwealth, Hobbes suggests that those first founders of it maintained fear in order to maintain peace, and so intertwined government with religion.

The two philosophers also share a common belief regarding the nature of man. Both see him as a being intent on his own advancement at any cost, tempered only by his realization that all men have such intent for themselves, and that the safety of their society - - and, therefore, of themselves - - demands its sacrifice. Lucretius expresses this clearly in the passage below:

> But men desired to be famous and powerful,
> in order that their fortunes might rest on a firm
> foundation and they might be able by their
> wealth to lead a tranquil life; but in vain, since in
> their struggle to mount up to the highest
> dignities they rendered their path one full of
> danger; and even if they reach it, yet envy like a
> thunderbolt sometimes strikes and dashes men
> down from the highest point with ignominy into
> noisome Tartarus... so that far better it is to obey
> in peace and quiet than to wish to rule with
> power supreme and be the master of
> kingdoms. (Lucretius, l. 1123-1138)

And here:

> For mankind, tired out with a life of brute force,
> lay exhausted from its feuds; and therefore the
> more readily it submitted of its own freewill to
> laws and stringent codes.
> (Lucretius, l. 1148-1151)

Such ideas echo back and forth between Lucretius and Hobbes. For both, science and reason explain needs and the progression of events. As a result, the mystery once associated with creation is banished, and the philosophers proceed to design a new system of ethics based on purely physical foundations. This conclusion, then, allows one to approach the eighteenth century, and Jonathan Swift, whose Tale of a Tub is deliberately

and explicitly framed as a response to Leviathan (and so to Lucretius), with a greater understanding of the origin and history of the ideas with which he takes issue.

Woven from the rich fibers of allegory and digression, Jonathan Swift's A Tale of a Tub, first published in 1704, is a masterful satire of the zealous tenets of eighteenth-century modernism. In it the reader encounters everything from the arguments between ancients and moderns, to a treatise on the beneficial characteristics of madness, to an imaginative retelling of Christian history. Its subject matter, in short, is varied and motley - - a seemingly stream-of-consciousness record of its author's colorful and often contradictory opinions. Still, while various tangents and non sequiturs may lead the reader to his or her own confusion, the work itself, and indeed its strange style and construction, serve a distinct and clear purpose - -to lay to rest two fundamental Epicurean principles that led to Hobbes's Leviathan and works like it. The first, espoused by Lucretius, is that every occurrence, be it earthly or supernatural, is explicable through physical materialism and the movements and combinations of atoms. Indeed, this is the fundamental lesson of Hobbes's earlier work, De Homine. As previously discussed, such extreme focus on the physical nature of the world provided for the Epicurean a system of disbelief in forces divine. The second principle against which Swift ventures is the utilitarianism that Hobbes offers as explanation for the common system of ethics embraced by man. Hobbes removes from the daily lives of men their own reason, emotion, and free will: it is not because they are rational that they develop laws, governments, societies; not because they are creative that they produce art, music, and literature; not because they are naturally sympathetic and warm that they develop friendships and reproduce families. It is because men have joined in a tacit utilitarian contract. In De Homine he states that politics and ethics are "the sciences of the just and unjust, of equity and inequity" (42), and that both are accepted because, like friendship, art, and invention, they are useful (49-50). James Moore identifies the same penchant in

the work of Epicurus, and so strengthens the connection between Epicurus and Hobbes within the school of philosophical skepticism:

> Epicurean moralists perceived the virtue of justice to be derived from nothing but its utility. "Justice is nothing in itself," Epicurus said. "Mankind, united in Society, discovered the Utility and Advantage of agreeing among themselves." ... Epicurus and his followers observed that, once the laws had curbed and regulated differences of temperament, it was possible for some, at least, to live in sympathy with one another. (Moore, 29)

It is these two profound and pessimistic principles that Jonathan Swift attempts to disavow through A Tale of a Tub. To begin a study of how Swift accomplishes this weighty task, it is wisest to first analyze the personality behind the pen; not, as one might assume, Jonathan Swift himself, but the persona who claims to be the author of A Tale of a Tub.

II.

It is difficult to paint a true portrait of the persona in A Tale of a Tub. In his preface he claims to be "a most devoted Servant of all *Modern* Forms" (Swift, Writings, 286) and displays pride at his membership in the Grub Street fraternity. The student of Swift recognizes immediately that the Dean and the "author" are far from being of one mind. Quite early in the work it becomes clear that Swift, champion of the *ancient* school, intends to use his modern persona to expose the weaknesses of modernity itself. He manipulates the persona into countless embarrassments and contradictions, ultimately discovering him as a madman. Not the least of his formula for doing so involves the extreme egoism of the persona; such self-involvement, combined with what John R. Clark

calls the urgent "presentness" of moderns in general, results in a combination described well by Clark:

> This overwhelming presentness gives the *Tale of a Tub* its atmosphere of impulsion and colors its modern author as well with a pervasive egotism. As if in haste, the Modern always speaks in the first person singular and always in the present tense, preferably in the progressive present: "I am now trying an Experiment" ...; "I do here gladly embrace" ...; "I am now advancing"...;'I do here humbly propose" ...; "I proceed to refute" ...
> (Clark, 119-120)

Overwhelmingly concerned with only contemporary events and his own place within them, the persona reveals himself as something of a fool, not unlike the inward-looking Struldbruggs of Swift's later work, Gulliver's Travels.

At the start of his writing, the persona claims that his purpose is to produce a diversion for removing attention from Thomas Hobbes's Leviathan, which he has been told, and believes, is a danger to the Commonwealth of England. Recalling that the work is based upon the theories of Epicurus, as recorded by Lucretius, it is an interestingly ironic task to analyze the persona in terms of Epicurean/Lucretian ideas about man. Thomas Hobbes distinguishes between two extreme states of mind, sensuality and fancifulness; the "sensual man" seeks only momentary pleasures of the senses, which lead him to "ignore honor or future events and goals, until he becomes progressively less diligent, less curious, less sensible, withdrawing into himself with a totally inert lassitude common to many a psychotic" (Clark, 26). In many ways this defines the modern persona of A Tale of a Tub; he is merely concerned with his own ideas and schemes, and slowly "devolves into madness" (Clark, 38), as revealed later in his *Digression concerning the Original, the Use and Improvement of Madness in a Commonwealth.*

Ironically, that pursuit of momentary sensual pleasure echoes some of the ideas of Epicurus, which laid the foundation for Hobbes.

Further, the modern persona personifies Hobbes's idea of the "good wit," which is defined as the ability to observe similitudes in all things, but, oddly enough, use that ability without discretion (Leviathan, 135) . As Clark explains, moderns "have just such a fantastical ability to discover metaphysical metaphors in their imaginings - precisely without method, culture, or instruction" (Clark, 137). In addition, it is interesting to note the basic stylistic similarities between the persona and Hobbes. Both are masters of digression, often losing themselves in trains of thought that carry them away from their intended path. And yet, it must be noted that Hobbes disapproves of the "sensual man," espousing a qualified Epicureanism in its stead (perhaps even ultimately revealing himself a stoic).

Another characteristic of the modern narrator is his often contradictory manner. He frequently reverses his own profound claims, and, as Clark notes, "very consciously seeks to be paradoxical" (Clark, 182). For example, Clark continues, the persona "declares his ability to write 'On Nothing,' he argues that where his own writing is incomprehensible, 'it shall be concluded, that something very useful and profound is coucht underneath'...He praises destructive criticism ... extols digressions ... lauds madness"(Clark, 182). All of this he does with the extreme zeal of the most devoted modern disciple, thereby overturning his own credibility and replacing it with so many distractions that the reader is hardly surprised when, in Section IX, *A Digression concerning the Original, the Use and Improvement of Madness in a Commonwealth*, he recommends that every "Student and Professor" in Bedlam be studied for his many talents and employed in "the several Offices in a state ***** *Civil* and *Military*," and that special consideration be given to this suggestion because he himself "had some Time the Happiness to be an unworthy Member" of that "honourable Society," Bedlam (Swift,

353). In effect, then, the persona acknowledges that he is mad, and so his deterioration is complete.

Having established the persona with whose peculiarities the reader must deal, it is easier to address the manner and result of Swift's intentions - - namely to respond to Hobbes and those of his materialistic school. The most comprehensive way to do so is to examine in order of occurrence those references, veiled and obvious, that deal with the Hobbes/Epicurus/Lucretius issue. The first of these is found in the very first section of A Tale of a Tub, *An Apology for the, &c.* In defense of the pages to follow, the "author" maintains that there is nothing within them by which the Church of England can be offended, and that if objections are made, they would be better levied against other works more in need of criticism:

> [The tale] contains nothing to provoke them [clergymen] by the least Scurillity upon their Persons or their Functions. It Celebrates the Church of England as the most perfect of all others in Discipline and Doctrine, it advances no Opinion they reject, nor condemns any they receive. If the Clergy's Resentments lay upon their Hands, in my humble Opinion, they might have found more proper Objects to employ them on ... I mean those heavy, illiterate Scriblers, prostitute in their Reputations, vicious in their Lives, and ruin'd in their Fortunes, who to the shame of good Sense as well as Piety, are greedily read, meerly upon the Strength of bold, false, impious Assertions, mixt with unmannerly Reflections upon the Priesthood, and openly intended against all Religion; in short, full of such Principles as are kindly received, because they are levell'd to remove those Terrors that Religion tells Men will be the Consequence of immoral Lives. (Swift, Writings, 266)

The final words of the passage above are the most telling, if subtle. For what works before this time have gone farthest in removing the "Terrors" wrought upon man through religion and its threatening afterlife than those of Lucretius and Hobbes? Both

philosophers urge the tortured layman to embrace materialism, and with it the complete death of body *and* soul at the moment of human expiration, thereby rejecting the commonly held ideas of religion with its "unmannerly Reflections upon the Priesthood." It is to this rebellious theory that the modern persona refers, and at which he will continue to volley philosophical, and ultimately ineffectual, bombs. Maintaining later that indeed a reply to or criticism of one work (as his is to and of Leviathan) requires more talent and perspiration than the writing of the piece in question, the author moves through postscript and dedication until he arrives at his *The Preface,* in which he will explain, in a rare moment of clarity, the purpose of his tale.

Opening *The Preface* with an explanation of how his assignment came to be, the persona reveals that "the Grandees of *Church* and *State*" were becoming quite alarmed at the growing number of wits in society, and fearful that they would take it upon themselves to "pick Holes in the weak sides of Religion and Government" (Swift, 284). To avoid such widespread attack, continues our narrator, he himself was called upon to provide a diversion for the wits, the model for which was born of certain maritime practices:

> Mean while the Danger hourly increasing, by new Levies of Wits all appointed (as there is Reason to fear) with Pen, Ink, and Paper which may at an hours Warning be drawn out into Pamphlets, and other Offensive Weapons, ready for immediate Execution: It was judged of absolute necessity, that some present Expedient be thought on, till the main Design can be brought to Maturity. To this End, at a Grand Committee, some days ago, this important Discovery was made by a certain curious and refined Observer; That Sea-men have a Custom when they meet a *Whale*, to fling out an empty *Tub*, by way of an Amusement, to divert him from laying violent Hands upon the Ship. This Parable was immediately mythologiz'd: The *Whale* was interpreted to be *Hobbes's Leviathan*, which tosses and plays with all other Schemes of Religion and Government, whereof a great many are hollow, and dry, and empty, and noisy, and wooden, and given to Rotation, This is the *Leviathan* from whence the terrible Wits of our Age are said to borrow their Weapons. The *Ship* in danger is easily understood

> to be its old Antitype the *Commonwealth*. ... And it was decreed, that in order to prevent these *Leviathans* from tossing and sporting with the *Commonwealth*, (which of it self is too apt to *fluctuate*) they should be diverted from that Game by a *Tale of a Tub*. And my Genius being conceived to lye not unhappily that way, I had the Honor done me to be engaged in the Performance. (Swift, Writings, 284)

A Tale of a Tub, then, is the literary distraction intended to deliver the standards of Church and State from the predatory beast that is Leviathan. The persona believes that new philosophies such as those advanced by Hobbes will destroy the balance and order of England itself, and invites the reader to believe that his "Genius" alone will be the means by which it is saved "till the main Design can be brought to Maturity." The reader might expect, therefore, that the tale to follow will contain a consistent series of facts and argument meant to debunk Hobbesian, and thereby in many ways Epicurean, philosophy, along with efforts to reaffirm those tenets of Christianity and monarchy believed to be in jeopardy. Instead, however, A Tale of a Tub is riddled with contradictions, reversals, and nonsensical connections that leave the reader quite unsure of the persona's agenda, and perhaps certain only of the fact that his proclaimed goal in *The Preface* has not been achieved.

One inconsistency displayed by the persona occurs quite early in the work, in Section I. *The Introduction*. In attempting to explain that in order to maintain the attention of the public one must obtain a "*superiour Position of Place*," the persona reveals a weakness in his antipathy toward theories upsetting to the status quo by employing one to explain that by "place" he does not mean social status or political office, but literal physical placement above the public - - be it by pulpit, ladder, or stage:

> FROM this accurate Deduction it is manifest, that for obtaining Attention in Publick, there is of necessity required a *superiour Position of Place*. But, altho' this Point be generally granted, yet the Cause is little agreed in; and it seems to me, that very few Philosophers

> have fallen into a true, natural Solution of this *Phenomenon*. The deepest Account, and the most fairly digested of any I have yet met with, is this, That Air being a heavy Body, and therefore (according to the System of *Epicurus*) continually descending, must needs be more so, when loaden and press'd down by Words. (Swift, Writings, 295)

Here, the champion of all things modern has called upon the theories of Epicurus to explain and support his claim that height lends superiority. Further, there exists a note within the text that gives Lucretius as the source used by the persona to discover that "System of *Epicurus*." The irony here is unmistakable; Lucretius, in extolling the merits of Epicurean materialism - - looking only to the physical world to explain intangibles - - has as well helped the persona explain his own "modern" ideas in a work aimed at discrediting Hobbes's Leviathan, a work that itself is largely founded upon Epicurean/Lucretian tradition. This irony does not bode well for the supposedly learned persona. A student would undoubtedly be aware of the connection between Lucretius and Hobbes, and the fact that the persona seems oblivious of it places in doubt his right to be the creator of the tub. He even goes as far as including two lines from Lucretius's De Rerum Natura:

> *Corporeum quoque enim vocem constare fatendum est,*
> *Et sonitum, quoniam possunt impellere Sensus*. Lucr.Lib.4.
>
> *'Tis certain then, that* Voice *that thus can wound*
> *Is all* Material; Body *every* Sound. (Swift, Writings, 295)

So, employing ancient and disruptive theory in his argument against it, the persona launches his tub with one philosophical hole already in its side.

Leaving preliminary elements at last, the persona next moves to Section II, in which he begins the story of the three brothers, Peter, Martin and Jack, whose persons and lives represent the Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist faiths cloaked in the allegory of the temptations of high fashion. The brothers quickly encounter conflict when, left alone

after the death of their father, and acting against the wishes set forth in his will, they invest in a new fashion (representing a new system of belief) and so embellish their simple but pure coats of Christianity with rich ornaments. The sect to which the brothers are attracted "held the Universe to be a large *Suit of Cloaths*, which *invests* every Thing: That the Earth is *invested* by the Air; The Air is *invested* by the Stars; and the Stars are *invested* by the *Primum Mobile*" (Swift, Writings, 304). It is obvious that the storyteller is disdainful of such new systems of belief, especially one which so obviously reduces the world and its characteristics to a very materialistic model - - not unlike the efforts of Lucretius and Hobbes to whom, in effect, he had referred to establish his own ideas in Section I. While this new condemnation is consistent with the ostensible reasons for writing the tale, the reader may find the obvious contradiction somewhat disconcerting. The persona, however, takes measures throughout the remainder of Section II to adhere to his main purpose. This is made quite clear when, at a moment in the allegory when one of the brothers objects to a new and questionable interpretation of his father's will, he is chastised by his siblings for looking too deeply into the "Mystery" of it;

> However, he objected again ... upon which he was taken up short, as one that spoke irreverently of a *Mystery*, which doubtless was very useful and significant, but ought not to be over-curiously pryed into, or nicely reasoned upon. (Swift, Writings, 309)

Recalling that one of the main goals of Hobbes and Lucretius was to eliminate the mysteries encouraged by religion and so free Man from the fear of what might happen to him in the afterlife, this is a well - placed and subtle jab at those men, and also a reinforcement of the importance of credulity within the scheme of religion. It certainly contributes to the protection of the system for which he is writing. Perhaps somewhat more confident that the "author" has found his true course, the reader is next invited into

A Digression Concerning Criticks, wherein is examined the feud between the ancients and the moderns, and the true character of the "critick" is revealed.

In his description of critics, however, the persona again refers to the ancient Lucretius to explain their poisonous effect on authors:

> *Est etiam in magnis Heliconis montibus arbos,*
> *Floris odore hominem retro consueta necare*. Lib. 6.
>
> *Near* Helicon, *and round the Learned Hill,*
> *Grow Trees whose Blossoms with their Odour kill.*
> (Swift, Writings, 315)

Once more, the man who claimed to be a student of all things modern relies on his long dead literary forefather to clarify his point ... a fact made all the more ironic by his obvious ignorance of the Lucretian origins of the Leviathan he so detests.

Yet it is not until much later in A Tale of a Tub, in Section IX. *A Digression Concerning the Original, the Use and Improvement of Madness in a Commonwealth*, that the persona attacks most energetically "the great Introducers of new Schemes." About such persons he writes the following:

> Let us next examine the great Introducers of new Schemes in Philosophy, and search till we can find, from what Faculty of the Soul the Disposition arises in mortal Man, of taking it into his Head, to advance new Systems with such an eager Zeal, in things agreed on all hands impossible to be known. ... Of this kind were *Epicurus, Diogenes, Apollonius, Lucretius, Paracelsus, Des Cartes*, and others; who, if they were now in the World, tied fast, and separate from their Followers, would in this our indistinguishing Age, incur manifest Danger of *Phlebotomy*, and *Whips*, and *Chains*, and *dark Chambers*, and *Straw*. For, what Man in the natural State, or Course of Thinking, did ever conceive it in his Power, to reduce the Notions of all Mankind, exactly to the same Length, and Breadth, and Heighth of his own? .... *Epicurus*, modestly hoped, that one Time or other, a certain Fortuitous Concourse of all Mens Opinions, after perpetual Justlings, the Sharp with the Smooth, the Light and the Heavy, the Round and the Square, would by certain *Clinamina*, unite in the

> Notions of Atoms and Void, as these did in the Originals of all Things. (Swift, Writings, 348)

The success or failure of such philosophies depends entirely upon luck, continues the persona, luck in striking a sympathetic chord at the right time with the right persons, who will then become disciples. Strike poorly, however, and you will be considered a fool. The persona indeed attributes the success of Epicurean and other philosophies (including those of Diogenes, Lucretius, and Des Cartes) to "my *Phoenomenon of Vapours*, ascending from the lower Faculties to over-shadow the Brain, and there distilling into Conceptions, for which the Narrowness of our Mother-Tongue has not yet assigned any other Name, besides that of *Madness* or *Phrenzy*" (Swift, 348). It can be inferred, then, that the persona believes Epicurus, and so Hobbes, to be madmen. If this be true, then, as suggested earlier, the persona is a madman as well; for in his own work does he not attempt "to reduce the Notions of all Mankind, exactly to the same Length, and Breadth, and Heighth of his own"? Further, and perhaps more important, does this not make him an ancient rather than a modern? In the course of his tale, the persona has lost his identity, and so arguably his credibility as a reliable source of criticism.

Yet, if he is mad, he goes further in this digression to argue against Hobbesian materialism. Using satire as his weapon, the persona proceeds to reveal that material explanations for spiritual concerns leave nothing more to the world of education than, ironically, a void. He gives materialism a chance to explain the differences in men - - those elements that create in one an Alexander the Great and in another a fool - - and the reasons for madness:

> *There is in Mankind a certain * * * * * *
> * * * * * * * * * * * *
> Hic multa desiderantur * * * * * * * * * *
> * * * * * * * * * * * *
> * * * * * * And this I take to be a clear Solution of the Matter. (Swift, Writings, 350)

By making obvious the complete absence of the words that might have illuminated the utility of materialism, the persona brilliantly reveals the theory's inability to do so, leaving behind a trail of atom-like asterisks in place of philosophical information. The persona uses this disproving of reason to launch a campaign in favor of the imagination, offering that illusion rather than reality is the true road to happiness and peace. Note the following passage in which the persona emphasizes the importance of credulity over curiosity:

> if it were not for the Assistance of Artificial *Mediums*, false Lights, refracted Angles, Varnish, and Tinsel; there would be a mighty Level in the Felicity and Enjoyments of Mortal Men. (Swift, Writings, 351)

Whereas Lucretius claimed that the elimination of mystery would serve to bring all men to a level with the gods, the brother of Grub Street insists that the result will instead be a levelling of happiness among them, who need the mystery, the ornament, in order to remain content. Reason, he concludes, is akin to curiosity, which itself is a destructive force because it leads one beyond the surface, and away from the more peaceful and desirable state of credulity - - a state scorned by Lucretius and Hobbes. It may then be argued that Hobbes, so curious and insistent in exposing weakness and error in the well - established institutions of religion and government, is an enemy to oblivion, a state that the modern persona desires passionately, and which, in another awesome irony, he finds most commendable in the practices of Epicurus:

> He that can with *Epicurus* content his Ideas with the *Films* and *Images* that fly off upon his Senses from the *Superficies* of Things; Such a Man truly wise, creams off Nature, leaving the Sower and the Dregs, for Philosophy and Reason to lap up. This is the sublime and refined Point of Felicity, called, *the Possession of being well deceived*; The Serene Peaceful

State of being a Fool among Knaves. (Swift, Writings, 352)

From this passage several conclusions can be extracted. First, the persona believes that those who attempt to reason too often are conniving knaves, while those who accept the superficial world are in the enviable position of being fools. Second, the practices of Epicurus to which the persona refers as a model of successful foolishness are his aesthetic indulgences - - his attempts to enjoy life as much as possible through satisfaction of his physical needs. This idea echoes the idea of the persona as Hobbes's "sensual man," and his appreciation for others of his ilk. Third, the persona ignores, or worse is unaware, that this contentment with "the *Superficies* of Things" stems from a deeply revolutionary, not to mention ancient, theory that denies that man's soul moves on from death to afterlife and, further, refuses to acknowledge any divinity in the creation of the world, relying instead on atomism and materialism to explain those things conventionally explained through the tenets of religion. Thus, the entity that the persona so desires to protect - - religion - - becomes a casualty of his own philosophical concordance with his professed enemy, Hobbes. Such irony makes clear that the persona has reached his own ideal state. He is a credulous fool, uninterested in delving beneath the surface of any philosophy, including his own. As a result, throughout A Tale of a Tub he often extols out of ignorance the ideas against which he is meant to rage, and sinks, along with his tub, into a sea of madness.

III.

Study of the persona, however, does not automatically satisfy queries about the author of A Tale of a Tub, Jonathan Swift himself. There is a strange relationship between Swift and the persona; while ostensibly they represent two diverse

schools of thought - - Swift the well established ancients, and the persona the evolving moderns - - yet they share an odd kinship. In many ways, their differing styles and opinions lead each to the same conclusion, and in this sense the Dean aligns himself with the Grub Street fraternity more than perhaps he means to. Before the two are compared, however, it is best to look briefly at the man behind the work in order to discover his own ideas about the issues with which he deals in A Tale of a Tub. The most effective means of doing so is to sketch Swift's general attitude toward religion, modernism, and the status quo.

Swift's religious philosophy was relatively simple. He was an Anglican, and deeply rooted in the Church of England. Nevertheless, he was Irish as well and during his lifetime, which would eventually lead him to the Deanship of St. Patrick's in Ireland, he was witness to tumultuous religious events there. Arguably, it was these events that provided one of the major impulses to write the Tale. As Patrick Reilly explains in Jonathan Swift : The Brave Desponder, Swift experienced a great deal of frustration caused by certain restless Protestants:

> Swift lived at Kilroot as Anglican divine surrounded by Presbyterian descendents of Scottish settlers at a time when Catholicism, however doctrinally repugnant, had ceased to be a political threat. The Williamite settlement after Limerick ended for centuries the possibility of a Catholic property - owning class dominating Ireland and throughout the island the Catholics were reduced to helpless, impoverished servitude. The united Protestant front that had beaten the Popish, Gaelic threat could now break into its component parts, and in Ulster dissenters complained they had overthrown papal absolutism only to make a minority of Anglicans their new masters. Their grievances aroused Swift's anger and contempt - - he retorted sarcastically that he thought they had fought for the religious freedom which they now enjoyed; but freedom was apparently only the pretext to pursue power and the overthrow of the established Church. (Reilly, 65)

The last line of the passage above is of massive importance in understanding Swift's philosophy. His belief that freedom will lead to zealotry and rebellion is a driving force behind the tale's plot proper; three brothers who, after their father's death and against his will, take advantage of their liberty, manipulate the rules and eventually separate completely in order to form three new and different religions. A Tale of a Tub is more than a testament to the piety of its author, it is also an expression of his need for stability and the well tried lessons of the past.

Jonathan Swift is an ancient, a student of that seventeenth - century school which maintains that the only true models of literary excellence are the classics. Yet it must be asked, does Swift consider Lucretius an ancient? The classic origins of the latter were surely acknowledged by Swift as "ancient" in the technical sense, yet he goes on to at once attack him and use him to empower his own position in a frustratingly selective series of reactions. And although the persona is a satiric model of the detestable modern - - the writer who contests the sovereignty of the ancient masters - - the two can in fact be reconciled in one very important way: the ancient and the modern are equally scornful of curiosity.

In many ways, Swift immersed himself in the past - - namely the seventeenth - century - - where he found for himself a comfortable place within a sea of intolerance (Reilly, 87). The impatience he harbored was especially reserved for new systems of belief and those persons or groups who questioned the already established tenets of religion and philosophy. Such a man was Thomas Hobbes who, with the help of Lucretius, attempted to remove mystery (and so fear of God) from the existence of man. Swift detested those who spurn inherited wisdom to seek new truths in morals and religion; they are, as John Stuart Mill suggests, "dissentients afflicted with the malady of thought, and society cannot survive when every man strives to become his own carver" (Reilly, 120). The status quo will falter. Though this portrait is vastly different from that

of the modern persona, or any modern, still the two are rather closely allied. Swift despises curiosity, and explores that detestation with a curiosity for which he has, of course, given *himself* license, because it is a threat to the establishment and an invitation to anarchy. And yet it cannot be denied that Swift displays an irresistible attraction to chaos, especially in the way he writes the parody in A Tale of a Tub. Note the following analysis of this penchant by Claude Rawson:

> The problem sometimes arises of just where the dominant focus lies: a parodic energy may blur a more central intention, and there may be a hiatus between a local parodic effect and the main drift of the discourse ... The cumulative effect of the *Tale's* formidable parodic array is to convey a sense of intellectual and cultural breakdown so massive and so compelling that the parodied objects, as such, come to seem a minor detail.
> (Rawson, 5)

Like Swift, the persona resents curiosity. However, his quarrel with it stems from his insistence that, as discussed earlier, it is simply more enjoyable to be credulous; to live with "the Assistance of Artificial *Mediums*, false Lights, refracted Angles, Varnish, and Tinsel" is eminently more powerful than to exist tainted with the odious and complicated nature of reason. The means are quite different, as are their causes, yet the result is the same. In the ways of both intellectual curiosity and political contentment with superficiality it is clear that Swift can be identified with his own disrespectful model of a modern.

Complicating the formula, however, is yet another Swiftean paradox. At the same time that Swift condemns Hobbes, he subscribes to him in various subtle and

unmistakable ways. Just as the persona uses Epicurean/Lucretian philosophy in his attack against it, Swift's writing accords with various aspects of Hobbes's work, most notably in his personal letters and Gulliver's Travels, which cast doubt on his supposed contempt for new and, keeping in mind Hobbes's connection with Lucretius and Epicurus, old philosophy. Swift seems to draw from and adhere to certain ideas of Hobbes while he vociferously condemns the rest of them. If he was trapped in the seventeenth century, Swift was in many ways stuck with Hobbes, an original to those one hundred years.

Having held correspondence with peers of renown equal to his own, including Alexander Pope and John Gay, Swift was able to express to them his honest opinions on most subjects. His feelings for mankind were no exception. In a letter to the Reverend Thomas Sheridan, dated 11 September 1725, Swift explains to the recently disappointed young man the following;

> If you are indeed a discarded Courtier, you have reason to complain, but none at all to wonder; you are too young for many Experiences to fall in your way, yet you have read enough to make you know the Nature of Man. It is safer for a Man's Interest to blaspheme God, than to be of a Party out of Power, or even to be thought so .... expect no more from Man than such an Animal is capable of, and you will every day find my Description of Yahoes more resembling.
>
> (Swift, Writings, 583-584)

The bitterness contained within these lines may well be attributed to Swift's own negative experience at court. Nevertheless, he expresses unmistakably a contempt not only for royals, but for the "Animal" that is man. At this time, Swift was undoubtedly working on Gulliver's Travels, which would be released for circulation the following year. His reference to "Yahoes," which would become the negative moniker for the humanlike creatures in Book IV, emphasizes that Swift's opinion of humankind strongly reflected Hobbesian ideas. This position is continually supported by evidence from later letters. In one to Alexander Pope on 29 September 1725, Swift asserts,

> principally I hate and detest that animal called man, although I hartily love John, Peter, Thomas and so forth. this [sic] is the system upon which I have governed my self many years...and so I shall go on until I have done with them I have got Materials Towards a Treatis proving the falsity of that Definition *animal rationale*; and to show it should be only *rationis capax*. Upon this great foundation of Misanthropy...The whole building of my Travells is erected. (Swift, Writings, 584-585)

Here it is clear that it is not each man ("John, Peter, Thomas and so forth") in and of himself that is the object of disgust. Rather it is the nature of *mankind* at which he volleys his criticism. In this letter as well Swift declares unmistakably his intentions for Gulliver's Travels; it is a "Treatis" based on that misanthropy which the author finds abundant in his fellow man and, arguably, in himself. Swift, like Hobbes, reveals a quarrel with the idea that men are fundamentally rational beings, and intends to prove his point in the story of Lemuel Gulliver. The commonly, and comfortably, held belief in human enlightenment by the masses has long been denied by some philosophers. John Locke, in an attack on the idea of human virtue as innate, selected several cultures in which seemingly universal "rules" such as preservation of children are completely denied; he thus asserts that if the most powerful, most basic moral principles can be ignored, then none can be innate (Ehrenpreis, 20). Swift was no stranger to these ideas, and explored them in *A Modest Proposal* as well as in personal correspondence and Gulliver's Travels. In yet another letter from Swift to Pope on 26 November 1725 he writes, "I tell you after all that I do not hate Mankind, it is vous autres who hate them because you would have them reasonable Animals, and are Angry for being disappointed. I have always rejected that Definition and made another of my own" (Swift, Writings, 586). In stating that because mankind is not a reasonable race it cannot be held accountable for actions less than honorable, Swift essentially robs society of its comfortable morality and labels it foolish. To regard man as such in his letters is a relatively safe means of expression; to make them known as such in public writings, as Swift vowed he would, is to involve himself deeply in

political and social controversy. The student of Swift will be aware that controversy was a tempest from which he did not fly; and in Gulliver's Travels he courts it most boldly, allowing his own characteristics of Hobbism to reveal themselves. Here, Swift uses the many adventures of Lemuel Gulliver to investigate freedom, selfishness, and human nature, and to express an opinion that, though originating in the mind of a "Church of England Man," demonstrates a strong influence by Thomas Hobbes, and thereby Epicurean/Lucretian tradition.

In Part I: *A Voyage to Lilliput*, Lemuel Gulliver begins his fantastic series of journeys by finding himself, by the force of nature, deposited on the shores of Lilliput, where he first glimpses the force of his *own* nature. Upon awakening to find himself bound by ropes, Gulliver immediately sets the tone of our and his own reactions to the tiny people whom he discovers are his captors by constantly referring to them as "creatures." The description of their movements, especially in terms of Gulliver's gigantic frame, suggests an insect-like quality. Gulliver's immediate reaction, quite condescending in tone, is followed directly by an animalistic instinct to lash out against his situation. Finding himself under such odd conditions, and at the mercy of such incredible captors, Gulliver describes his state of mind in one of the first and best references to Hobbesian theory in the entire piece:

> I confess I was often tempted, while they were passing backwards and forwards on my Body, to seize Forty or Fifty of the first that came in my Reach, and dash them against the ground. But the Remembrance of what I had felt, which probably might not be the worst they could do; and the Promise of Honour I made them, for so I interpreted my submissive Behaviour, soon drove out those Imaginations. Besides, I now considered myself bound by the Laws of Hospitality to a People who had treated me with so much Expence and Magnificence.
>
> (Swift, Writings, 8)

Gulliver's animalistic desire to harm the industrious yet annoying "creatures," the concern he displays for his own safety, and his subsequent decision to submit to the "Laws" of Lilliputian society in order to maintain it are Hobbesian enough on their own. The added element, however, of the captive's knowledge of his own power and the likelihood of success in its exercise completes the parallel to Hobbes's model of the necessary contract between men in order to survive. In Leviathan Thomas Hobbes offered a model of society in which he asserted that concessions such as Gulliver's were necessary to tame the beast in men and ensure a relatively peaceful coexistence. Take the following passage from Part I: *Of Man, Chapter XIV; Of the first and second Naturall Lawes, and of Contracts*, which describes in words the theory of society that brings Gulliver to his decision to submit:

> because the condition of Man ... is a condition of Warre of every one against every one; in which case every one is governed by his own Reason ... it followeth, that in such a condition, every man has a Right to everything; even to one anothers body. And therefore, as long as this naturall Right of every man to everything endureth, there can be no security to any man ... And consequently it is a precept, or generall rule of Reason, *That every man, ought to endeavour Peace, as farre as he has hope of obtaining it.* (Leviathan, 189-190)

From what he calls the "Fundamentall Law of Nature" to "seek Peace and follow *it*," Hobbes derives the second "Law of Nature,"

> *That a man be willing, when others are so too, as farre-forth, as for Peace, and defence of himselfe he shall think itnecessary, to lay down his right to all things; and be contented with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himselfe.* (Leviathan, 190)

Upon this first encounter with the Hobbesian instinct in himself, Gulliver embarks on a journey of human discovery parallel with that of the physical and intellectual. Later, in Chapter III of Book I, Gulliver is set free only by entering into contract with the rulers of Lilliput, a freedom questionable in definition, as we are told by the surgeon that he is bound to certain "Articles and Conditions," the performance of which he was made to swear "first in the Manner of... [his] own Country, and afterwards in the Method prescribed by their Laws" (Swift, 25).

After his escape from Lilliput and upon his arrival in Brobdingnag in Part II, Gulliver is transformed from the giant to the insect as he is taken in and ultimately exploited by the enormous Brobdingnagians. Again, he is held captive, this time not by chains, but by the frustrating knowledge that any attempt at rebellion or escape is hopeless; and again he acknowledges his weakened position within his new society, deciding ultimately that he must, in order to remain intact, submit to the wills and laws of Brobdingnagian society. In short, he must behave in a Hobbesian manner. Having decided and acted upon this decision, Gulliver is given a kind of liberty. He is certainly treated well, even doted upon by the women of the race, with his own governess and a queen who becomes so fond of him "that she could not dine without" him. In the end, however, Gulliver is treated as a curious house pet, compelled by the king to perform various tricks, and endowed with a perspective that for the first time allows him to see magnified the gross elements of the human body. This sort of freedom is, like that he experienced in Lilliput, of questionable merit. In the first two voyages, Swift attempts to disentangle the meaning and possibility of freedom in Gulliver's imprisonments, and finds easy answers to his queries in Hobbes's simple notion that freedom is in essence the absence of "external impediments;" for in both Lilliput and Brobdingnag it is easy to discern, by this definition, when Gulliver is actually "free" (Reilly, 57-58). Having willfully escaped from both countries, even after giving his word of honor to perform certain duties, and becoming aware that his fate could have been much worse if not for the

relative kindness of both races of captors, Gulliver has proven himself a good Hobbesian; for he has, despite his contracts, allowed his self-preservation first priority, and acted in such a way as to ensure it (Reilly, 22). Evidence for this assumption can be found in countless passages of Hobbes's Leviathan, most notably in Part II: *Of Common - Wealth*, wherein he writes the following:

> In relation to these Bonds only it is, that I am to speak now, of the *Liberty of Subjects*. For seeing there is no Common - wealth in the world, wherein there be Rules enough set down for the regulating of all actions, and words of men, (as being a thing impossible:) it followeth necessarily, that in all kinds of actions, by the laws praetermitted, men have the Liberty, of doing what their own reasons shall suggest, for the most profitable to themselves. (Leviathan, 264)

In essence, then, Gulliver is following the simple formula set out by Hobbes that allows him to take action in preserving his own life: self-preservation is the first law of nature for Hobbes, and it is a liberty granted under the idea of the "voluntary" contract, which, though necessary, is not in and of itself the most important part of man's existence. These ideas of freedom, so clearly defined in the first two voyages of Gulliver's Travels, become more complex as Gulliver finds himself a prisoner not only to foreigners, but to the society of his fellow men - - to humanity itself, which he has grown to associate with animal brutality - - until at last he submits to the noble horses in Part IV: *A Voyage to the Country of the Houynhnms*.

Resigning himself to Houyhnhnm society, calling one of its members "master," there is a strong indication that Gulliver is happy to enter into contract with the horses, is almost relieved to be in a society of what he thinks reasonable and enlightened creatures. Having asserted to his master that his own country is run by Yahoos, Gulliver has as well

acknowledged that his home is one governed by beasts, all of whom may be considered the culmination of every gross and dull-minded creature he has met during his four sea voyages. The horses certainly live in harmony with one another; and the contrast between them and the Yahoos, or humans, and the penchant of that species for deceit as a means of self-preservation is undeniably sharp both to Gulliver and the careful reader. Hobbes addresses the subject of dishonesty, in a passage in Leviathan about words and their abuses, citing four main offenses: self-deception, deception of others, false representation of one's will or desire, and the causing of grief to others (Leviathan, 102). One can relate the first two abuses directly to Gulliver; for he has until now deceived himself as to the true nature of man in his defense of his country and his purposeful concealment of certain unattractive elements of his own society - - this all during conversation with the curious horses. Having, however, arrived into the company of creatures he thinks to be the zenith of reason and truth, he is all too aware of the differences in attitude concerning truth and speech; to reinforce this contrast, his master tells him "That the Use of Speech was to make us understand one another, and to receive Information of Facts; now if any one *said the Thing which was not*, these Ends were defeated" (Swift, 207).

When finally exiled by the horses, Gulliver finds himself a changed man. Had he remained himself throughout his travels, Gulliver would have been overjoyed to meet Don Pedro, his saviour; for the kind mariner, who by virtue of his deeds as well as his name, easily translated "St. Peter," is arguably the only symbol of human goodness with which Gulliver meets, and is indeed the very evidence that a more alert man might use to rebuild some faith in humanity (though Gulliver does admit to Don Pedro's "Very good *human* Understanding") (Swift, 253). But Gulliver is completely altered, and so too is his notion of freedom; he no longer wishes to live in a society of human beings, all of whom he now considers Yahoos. Evidence of this attitude, and of Swift's own cynicism, can be found by looking again at the name of Gulliver's savior. For the last name of Don Pedro (St. Peter) is Mendez, a word which equates with the Spanish word for "liar," *mendaz* (Cassell's,

418). In the Portuguese language, Mendez comes closest to the word for "beggar," *mendigo* (Basic Dictionary, 685). Such wordplay identifies Don Pedro as a lying saint, and emphasizes Gulliver's deteriorating opinion of his fellow man - - even the kindest of souls, he believes, is somehow inherently unworthy of trust. He has seen Hobbes's animal, and wants never to return to so-called "civilized" society again. Interestingly, he does not equate himself with the Yahoos of his world , and so it may be acknowledged, ironically, that he himself has fulfilled the Hobbesian requirement of narcissistic, self-preservating savagery. Thus, Gulliver, the persona, becomes the object of Swift's satire. Yet return he must, and so Gulliver finds himself on the border of his own jungle, once the England - - the home - - he loved, and void of the love of humanity he possessed before his adventures began.

Throughout Gulliver'sTravels there lay countless Hobbesian doors waiting to be opened. Each lends itself to the decoding of Lemuel Gulliver's journey from peaceable Englishman to hopeless misanthrope, a journey that Swift seems to share to the exclusion of allowing himself to become that which he scorns (thus his selective use of arguments and his gentle sojourns into hypocrisy). As Gulliver himself crosses each new threshold he is drawn further and further away from the ideals of men like Don Pedro, and deeper into the dark state of nature of Thomas Hobbes. So often held captive by fetters, Gulliver is at these times at his most blessed; for he remains unaware of the nature of man and the evils which, so claims Hobbes and believes Swift, it embraces, thereby remaining at liberty for intellectual and emotional optimism. His idealism and patriotism, however, cannot protect him from what he comes to find as a harsh reality, the knowledge of which will prevent his ever living in peace with his fellow human beings again. Lemuel Gulliver has learned that in the state of nature, reason and true liberty are impossible, "And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short" (Leviathan, 186).

Swift's works commonly attempt to introduce mankind to itself, most often employing satire to create a looking glass which, when held up to the visage of humanity, reflects a being sometimes monstrous, and often ignorant. And while the ignorance against which he rails is born mainly of new and untried systems of thought, some, such as Thomas Hobbes's De Homine and Leviathan, find their origins in classical sources which, as an ancient, Swift supposedly espoused. Ironically, Swift distorts his own principles by using elements of those ideas he detests to empower his argument. A Tale of a Tub was ostensibly written to contest Leviathan, a work which was odious to Swift because of its attempt to remove mystery from the minds of man. And yet in the first of many ironies, Swift draws from Leviathan those characteristics that most conveniently agree with his own ideas of the nature of man, discarding the rest, many of which find their origins in the ideas of ancients such as Epicurus and Lucretius. Further, the persona of A Tale of a Tub is a modern, content with the superficiality of forms, and disdainful of curiosity. He is everything, one assumes, that the ancient Swift is not. Still, in his writings one finds countless traces of his own leanings toward the ideas of Hobbes, as well as characteristics shared with the modern he so scorns. For Swift also robs man of his status as *animal rationale* and, like the modern, urges him not to be curious, not to attempt to remove from life its mysteries, and so its fears. It is the fear, Swift believes, that ensures a peaceful coexistence among men. Further, a study of Swift's letters and Gulliver's Travels reveals a strong connection between the Dean and the Hobbist school of thought. Though he claims to rage against Leviathan, especially the tenets within it that seek to reassure and embolden man as Lucretius and Epicurus did, he nevertheless agrees with Hobbes's definition of man and his natural state. Cautioning friends to "expect no more from Man than such an Animal is capable of, and you will every day find my Description of Yahoes more resembling" (Swift, 584), Swift echoes many of Hobbes's own observations, such as that man is a selfish brute, is innately bad, and is consequently thrust into a common contract with his kind. Such ironic and seemingly hypocritical similarities between Swift

and Hobbes cast doubt on Swift's intentions - - especially those behind A Tale of a Tub. Although expressly meant to debunk Leviathan, in reality A Tale of a Tub takes issue only with those elements of Leviathan that Swift finds most threatening to his own philosophies and those of the ancient school. Such selectivity reveals little about Swift's true opinion of Hobbes. It is certain, however, that the entity that Swift finds most frightening is not Hobbes's work, but the possibility of its accuracy.

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